

AVOID MAKING OF CRIMINALS BY GIVING CHILDREN A PLACE TO PLAY

Keeping Them From Evil Associations of Bad Companions Is the Aim of the Parks and Playgrounds Association

By ALICE M. ROYAL.

LAST Sunday and the Sunday before that I endeavored to show the evil influences of the streets upon young children, influences that lead to "gang" life, to petty thievery and in time to State's prison, sometimes, to the electric chair, and the efforts of the Parks and Playgrounds Association to correct these influences in as far as they are able to do, by giving the children a place to play, whether it is a vacant lot, a roof, or even the interior of an unused loft building, but always under the care and guidance of a teacher whose aim it is to instill in the children a spirit of fair play—to make them realize that it is just as much "stealing" to "swipe" an apple from the green goods man on the corner in a spirit of fun as it is to walk into a store and help one's self to anything lying about, which can be concealed without detection.

The starting point of many a boy and girl, especially in large and congested cities like New York, going on the wrong road is too often, the streets. There are the neighborhood fights and the victor is the hero, his fist is his passport and usually lands him in some reformatory or in trouble with the police. It takes him into the poolroom, into the corner saloon and well—that's the material from which "gunmen" and their ilk are made.

There is no boy or girl, no man or woman who goes wrong because they want to, because it is in them—no, there is always something, small the thing may be, a word, a look—but it's something that starts them on the downward path. In New York and kindred cities, in nine cases out of ten it is the streets where they meet vicious companions, fall into evil ways, where they learn to shoot craps, to call other names, to use profanity, to use their fists—and when they fall with them, to "get a gun" somewhere, and make the other fellow "bite the dust." Where they begin as boys to form cliques and develop into gangs that terrorize the neighborhood, and it all leads to the cry, give the children a place to play!

Aside from these evils of the streets, there is another—a crying evil that calls out aloud for a remedy. It is the loss of life to children playing on the streets. A headline in a daily paper recently informed the public that twenty-five children were killed in the streets of New York and 146 injured, some slightly, some seriously, during the month of April. Other large and congested cities, while not equalling New York in figures still show an appalling number of death and accidents to children on the streets.

If we stop to think, 25 children killed in the streets of New York during the month of April alone and 146 injured, some of them maimed for life, all of them obliged to suffer pain, it must make us realize the congested conditions of our city, that has but few spots for the children to play besides the streets, where their very life is not safe.

"Keep them off the streets," say those who do not know or understand; but to them who would say this let me say: Suppose you were the mother of five or six small children; suppose you lived on the top floor back of a stuffy tenement in three or four small rooms—would you "keep them off the streets"? Could you? Ten thousand and more tenement mothers will tell you that it is next to impossible, and besides that the children must have air and they must play—it is their right. The child who does not know what play means in its childhood grows up into a stunted youth, and stunted youth grows up into imperfect manhood and womanhood.

Out on the Western plains, where children romp in God's own country, we find specimens of magnificent manhood

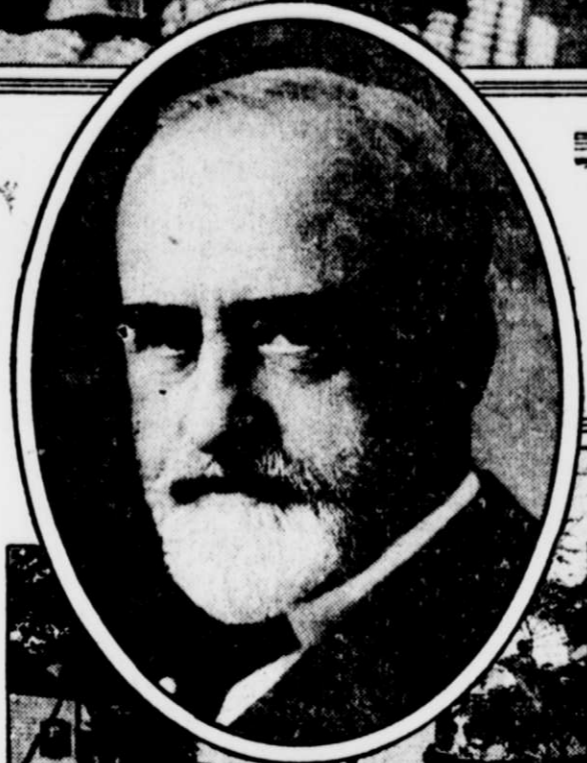


GUILD OF PLAY ON ROOF OF HOSPITAL FOR RUPTURED AND CRIPPLED CHILDREN, 42nd ST. AND LEXINGTON AVE.

and womanhood, but they are hard to rear in the stuffy, improper air of the congested tenement districts and the foul odors of the poorer quarters of any great city. These same conditions cause more cases of tuberculosis and kindred diseases than hereditary or any other causes. A walk through the crowded tenement districts on any warm day will convince the reader of the truth of this statement. There are plenty of healthy children there, but too many, far too many, upon whose sunken cheeks the pallor of the tenements hangs.

The city is doing everything in its power to remedy this defect, to stamp out these evils, but to meet the demands upon it it can move but slowly, especially in the establishment of public playgrounds and recreation spots for the children of those districts where normal conditions of living have ceased to exist; and as long as the children have no place to play save the streets they will continue to be run over, killed, injured, maimed. It's not an uncommon thing to read in the papers that some mother sees her child run over in the streets under her very eyes, or that a father helps to raise the wheels of a trolley to find his son a crushed, mangled little mass beneath them. Heartrending? Yes, but true; and the pitiful part of it all is that often the fault is no one's. The driver of a truck or a trolley and the chauffeur do all in their power to prevent just such accidents, but the children are small, so small sometimes that the man sitting high on a truck does not see the little toddler until it is under the horse's feet, or runs in front of a trolley before the motorman can apply the brakes, and then there is a wild scene—mothers and fathers run to the streets; they threaten to lynch the poor motorman, who perhaps has children of his own at home and whose heart is breaking over the loss of the little life that through no fault of his has gone out.

Then there are the automobile accidents. Chauffeurs are not at all speed maniacs. They are human too, and when their car grinds down some little creature running across the street, hoping to make the other side before the car can touch it and before the man at the wheel can stop the machine, the accident hurts them and haunts them as long as they live. This condition of things is more pitiful than the general public believes or imagines. In these days of materialism and sordid commercialism it would seem that a life—a child's life, especially—is of no value. The best way to drive home things of this kind is to say to every father and



JUSTICE EUGENE A. PHILBIN



A POPULAR RING GAME

mother, put yourself in the place of those parents whose baby has been run over in the street. The cold perspiration runs down your back, you shudder, perhaps close your eyes and press your little darling closer to your heart—and yet last month twenty-five mothers had their little ones brought home to them, dead, killed in the streets. A hundred

Many Prominent Persons and Organizations Plea for More Playgrounds for Young Persons—Cooperation of Parents Urged

and forty-six more saw them injured, writhing in pain. Have we become inhuman—are these things nothing to us? Is the thoroughbred dog we keep securely attached to a leash while we have him on the streets of more value than the life of a little child? There are those of us who would not strike a dog for anything, nor kick a cat, and it should be so; cruelty is not an admirable trait, yet we will let children be run down in the streets, killed and injured, and all we say is "Too bad!" "Poor little thing!" and involuntarily the thought runs through our mind "Why don't parents keep their children off the streets?"

What does it all lead to? Give the children a place to play! As I stated, the city is doing its best, but without cooperation it is almost helpless; it cannot make adequate provision for this crying need, and many public spirited citizens of this city as well as other large cities understand it and are doing their best to help the cause along. There is the National Association of Parks and Playgrounds, of which Col. Roosevelt is president, and which has for its aim the establishment of playgrounds in all great cities, and there is the Parks and Playgrounds Association of the City of New York, of which George Gordon Battle is president, that does all in its power to better conditions along these lines in Greater New York. This organization steps into the breach as it were, and gives its aid to the city as well as works on its own initiative in establishing and maintaining and of course conducting play centers under a competent teacher wherever the work needs to be done. In the use of park properties and piers it cooperates with the city and in the establishment of playgrounds in vacant lots, on roofs and in conducting a system of

street play where all other facilities are lacking or where roofs are not available it acts without the aid of any one. This association is doing more good for the city and its coming citizens than is generally accredited to it. Not only does it try to give the children a place to play, it tries to instill into them those principles upon which good citizenship must be founded. The value of parks and playgrounds is an established fact. Recently at a meeting of the Chelsea Neighborhood Association no less a person than the Right Rev. M. J. Lavelle of St. Patrick's Cathedral made a plea for more playgrounds for the children of the city and impressed upon his hearers the need of good, wholesome play under favorable surroundings, with respect for the rights of others and their property and desire to avoid arrest for misdemeanors rather than think it "smart" to be taken to the police court.

The Association of Parks and Playgrounds aims to do these very things. It devotes its resources, which it derives from membership fees and voluntary contributions, to active work with and for the children of Greater New York, for every child is not fortunate enough to have the usual privilege of childhood in this city; in fact a very small minority are; the great majority must take their chances on the streets unless other provision is made for them. Fortunately there are many people interested in this movement for playgrounds for the children, among them such prominent people as Judge Eugene A. Philbin, who for eight years was president of the association and did all in his power for it. Judge Philbin is still interested in it and never allows an opportunity for aiding it in some way to go by. Then there is Andrew Carnegie, who a few years ago allowed the use of a vacant lot owned by him opposite his residence on Fifth Avenue for a playground until the plot was purchased by Otto Kahn. Handmaster Henry Liff of the Veteran Corps of Artillery Band is another person interested in the welfare of the association and he has placed his magnificent band at the service of the Playgrounds Association for a week of popular band concerts, beginning tomorrow, Monday, May 18, at the Twelfth Regiment Armory. Mr. Liff has arranged a delightful series of programmes for the affair, featuring the old time songs favorites, the songs we used to hear "at mother's knee" when we were children and perhaps had backyards and lawns to play on or open fields and meadows. A great deal of interest has been evinced in this benefit and a number of prominent soloists and dancers have volunteered their services, all of which goes to show that people are interested in the playgrounds movement and are willing to add their "mite" to its success.

Miss Morton, secretary of the society, declares that plans for the coming summer are now under way and that their work for this year will probably exceed their past record. Last summer the association cared for over two hundred and fifty thousand children and conducted thirty-four place centres so that some idea of the greatness of the work they are accomplishing may be derived from those figures.

Miss Morton and Miss Madeline Stevens, who has charge of the "Guild of Play," that department devoted to the establishment of street play, tell many interesting stories about the children who come under their care.

Miss Stevens declares that very often the children are afraid of the teachers, and the hardest part of their work often lies in the fact that they are obliged to assure them that they do not want to reform them, but just give them a good time and keep them from those conditions that require reformation, but as soon as they realize the truth the work becomes a pleasure.

"The greatest trouble with most children," says Miss Morton, "is to keep them from the evil associations of bad companions, and that cannot be done while they are allowed to run wild in the streets. It is so much harder to reform them than it is to prevent them from falling into evil ways."

Reformation, of course, is a very good thing. St. Paul was a fair example of what reformation will do for a man, but the world would be a whole lot better off if reformation were not necessary; but unfortunately it will probably be necessary for all time. But we can keep it in the minimum if we watch the children, see that they grow up in proper environments; if in great cities like New York, where stone and mortar have taken the place of the back yard and the lawn, we give them playgrounds and proper chaperonage, besides preventing heart-breaking accidents and saving many a little life, rich or poor, children of the avenue or children of the tenements—and life is as sweet to the little tot whose Sunday treat is a walk up the Drive and a lollipop as it is to the little lady who owns her own car and orders her bonbons done up in satin boxes. The sun, the sky, the green trees, the joy of living exists for us all. The assistance of every public spirited citizen should go to those organizations that are trying to better the conditions of the poor children of the city, thereby laying a wholesome, solid foundation for the future of the city as well as of the nation.

The welfare of a country depends not upon its wealth or its famous men or women, not upon the man who plans great things, but upon its children, upon its future generation, upon the men who can carry into effect the great things planned; upon the men and women who do the world's work.

The subway is a masterpiece of engineering, but of what avail that master mind that planned it, the genius that dominated it, if the man with the shovel had not been there to dig the ground and put it to effect? No, upon the master mind but upon the hands that execute depends the future of progress of all things; so begin with the children, give them wholesome surroundings—a happy childhood—and let them develop future manhood to the good of the nation.

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the pool, pondered a moment, wadded one of the biggest of his night walkers on his hook, tossed it into the water which had seized the worm and had the lively tussle with the big trout, which had seized the worm and had the hook in his jaw.

"And the fisherman landed the trout, a two and a half pounder, to the great disgust of the artistic anglers; disgust with the trout for accepting the snaky bait and disgusted with the native fisherman for offering it to him.

"So here's a little word of advice to you if you intend going out camping this season, bent on fish: Never go into camp without a good supply of angle worms.

"The water will yield you minnows and perhaps dobson and crawfish. Old logs and stumps and the ground will supply you with grubs, but neither water, decayed wood nor the forest ground will give up to you the angle worm. Uncultivated soil is never the home of that creature. Take angle worms with you—take plenty of them—not less than two quarts. Keep them in damp moss in a cool place.

"And if there are pickers everywhere near your camp don't make the mistake of despising them, for as is too often the affection of the trout and bass fisherman. There is sport in the taking of them, and they are sweet and grateful to a hungry camper. Live bait is always killing to pickerel, and they are the most certain of all fish to take the troll. A strip of fat pork deftly fastened to a range of three small hooks is a better troll than any of the high priced spoons that the tackle man sells.

"Having caught your pickerel, if you will prepare it and cook it after this fashion I think you will wonder who it was that started the word that pickerel is a fish without flavor. Clean the pickerel nicely and split it all the way down the back. Then split it again under the backbone so as to remove that bone and most of the small ribs. Rub with fine salt, putting most of it on the thickest parts of the fish. Lap the sides of the fish together, or put two fish flesh to flesh, and let it lie long enough—over night, for instance—to corn the fish slightly, but the salting must not be too heavy.

"When you come to the cooking of the pickerel, wash the fish clean, place it fully spread out on a wire broiler and broil before a hot fire. When both sides are thoroughly cooked, serve with plenty of fresh butter spread on, and if you do not call it equal to any fresh water fish that swims, trout not excepted, then your judgment of the edible qualities of fish isn't to be envied.

"The trouble with your finical fisherman who decries the pickerel not only as a fish to have sport with but to eat is that he doesn't know how to cook it after it is caught."

IN NEXT SUNDAY'S SUN

A BASKET OF FISH

Wild Animal Adventure

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

Illustrated by Paul Bransom

Seldom has warfare as waged by the wild creatures of the woods been so graphically and thrillingly described as in this story by the greatest living interpreter of wild animal life. A great horned owl, a crafty red fox and a mink do battle over a basket of luscious trout—a fight between craft, strength and cunning. And the mink wins, just as Jack the Giant Killer did. The best animal story of the year, and splendidly illustrated by Paul Bransom in The Sun's Semi-Monthly.

THE PRINCE OF GRAUSTARK

The Great New Serial

By GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

Illustrated by R. F. Schabelitz

In this big instalment of "the serial that every one is reading," the cloak of secrecy, under which Prince Robin has been hiding, is torn from his shoulders and he stands in his royal character to the mysterious Miss Guile. Story and ship are both moving at a breath-taking clip in this instalment in The Sun's Semi-Monthly.

THE SINGULAR EXPERIENCE OF MR. SCOTT ECCLES

By A. CONAN DOYLE

Illustrations by Steele

A reminiscence of Sherlock Holmes. Mr. A. Conan Doyle gives you Don Murillo, the Tiger of San Pedro, in a new and startling manner.

WHAT A COLLEGE BOY GOES THROUGH

By GEORGE FITCH

Illustrated by Richard Culter

George Fitch gives you the inside workings of the students at Siwash and recites how they cured Petey Simmons of a painful enlargement of the head by the simple method of suggestion.

GETTING ALONG WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS

By WILLIAM BRADY, M. D.

Illustrations by J. Held

If you value your standing in the community and the good will of your neighbors never keep chickens; also be careful in your selection of lawn mowers. The writer also cautions about flags and social centres, and there is a good laugh and a kick in the story.